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SUBJECT: MERKEL TRIP COMMUNICATES STAUNCH OPPOSITION TO  
QUICK NATO AND EU ACCESSION FOR UKRAINE

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JOHN KOENIG FOR REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

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Summary  
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**¶1.** (C) Chancellor Merkel delivered a sobering message on MAP and an EU membership perspective for Ukraine during her July 21 visit to Kiev. According to Chancellery Russia and Eastern Europe Division chief Norman Walter. Merkel made clear that Germany supported Ukraine's eventual membership in NATO and perhaps even the EU, but did not support MAP or other dramatic developments in the immediate future. The Chancellery and the MFA appear united in this approach. Ukraine President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Tymoshenko frustrated Merkel's additional goal of addressing Ukraine's troubled internal politics; both appeared more interested in blaming each other for problems rather than working jointly towards solutions. Walter, who accompanied the Chancellor, told Charge and POLOFF that the conversation with Yushchenko was particularly disappointing. Merkel's visit to Ukraine has, if anything, stiffened Germany in its "go slow" approach. End summary.

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LONG WAIT FOR UKRAINE MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND THE EU  
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**¶2.** (C) During the July 21 visit to Ukraine, Merkel achieved two of her main goals by conveying to Ukraine President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Tymoshenko that both NATO and EU membership will involve an incremental process over a number of years. After President Yushchenko opened the allotted hour for talks with a 35-minute introduction focused entirely on Ukraine's path toward entry into NATO and the EU, Merkel disabused him of the notion that Ukraine's membership in either organization would be automatic or in the near future. A dejected Yushchenko thus had little to say during the rest of the visit, according to Walter, other than to reiterate that Ukraine should gain entrance into both organizations because the country is now free and democratic.

**¶3.** (C) Walter emphasized that the Chancellor views a Membership Action Plan (MAP) as a potentially divisive development for Ukraine, especially given low Ukrainian public support for NATO membership and domestic political problems. Germany fears a reversal of recent progress toward West-East reconciliation in Ukraine and even the potential for serious trouble in the Crimea. Rather than risk the election of a pro-Russian president in 2010 as a backlash to MAP, Walter suggested that Germany may support Ukraine's bid for membership after the 2010 election, particularly if a more flexible president enters office. In Germany's view,

Ukraine also remains ill-suited for NATO membership at present because of the government's inability to quell internecine squabbling, establish a government program and budget, and improve adherence to the rule of law. Merkel assured her interlocutors that Germany supported the Bucharest communique pledge that Ukraine would someday join the Alliance. But Walter noted that Merkel's clearly conveyed point that NATO membership is many years away likely leads Yushchenko to view Germany as a significant stumbling block between Ukraine and membership in NATO.

¶4. (C) Merkel's approach to Ukraine's EU membership also is long-term; Germany supports Ukraine's eventual membership but expects the process to be gradual and last a number of years. Although Tymoshenko appeared to accept this, Yushchenko reiterated several times that, as a free and democratic country, Ukraine should quickly gain entry to the EU.

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MERKEL SHARES ADVICE -- ONE COALITION HEAD TO ANOTHER  
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¶5. (C) According to Walter, Yushchenko and Tymoshenko rejected Merkel's encouragement to demonstrate a thawing of relations between the two and continued to blame each other for Ukraine's problems rather than tackling problems together. During lunch, Merkel emphasized that Yushchenko and Tymoshenko were the faces of the Orange Revolution and that Germany supports both individuals as such. However, Merkel stressed that Yushchenko and Tymoshenko needed to cooperate, which would allow Germany to assist Ukraine in its quest for NATO and EU membership. Walter viewed Tymoshenko as slightly

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more accepting of this need and more flexible in her approach, but both Yushchenko and Tymoshenko continued to blame each for the country's problems. Merkel recounted her own experiences as head of a coalition government and stressed the need for compromise, especially regarding the difficult problems Ukraine must address (e.g., corruption, AIDS, and high gas prices). Tymoshenko agreed that Ukraine faces these difficult problems, but Yushchenko appeared largely unmoved, going so far as to say that "high gas prices do not interest the President."

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COMMENT  
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¶6. (C) In the German view, it was useful for Merkel to clarify that Germany will not support Ukraine's quick entry into NATO and the EU, nor an invitation to MAP at the December NATO ministerial. Charge argued the case for a December MAP invitation, noting the difference between MAP and membership, the low levels of public support for NATO in other aspirant countries at different stages of the MAP process, etc. But Merkel's visit to Ukraine has stiffened the German position. The squabbling between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko in Merkel's presence is seen as evidence of continued political instability and uncertainty at the very top in Kiev. This has reinforced the German assessment that Ukraine has much to do to get its house in order before a MAP invitation, and that it is too early for dramatic moves to bind Ukraine more closely into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. End comment.

KOENIG